

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-03 H-01 INR-07 L-02

NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 RSC-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

USIA-06 AID-05 IO-10 /072 W
----- 049193

R 160800Z JAN 75

FM AMEMBASSY ANKARA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7564
INFO AMEMBASSY ATHENS
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY NICOSIA
AMCONSUL ADANA
AMCONSUL ISTANBUL
AMCONSUL IZMIR

C O N F I D E N T I A L ANKARA 409

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, TU

SUBJ: THE PRESIDENT AND THE POLITICAL CRISIS

SUMMARY: A STATEMENT BY THE SECRETARY GENERAL OF THE PRESIDENT ON JANUARY 13 THAT KORUTURK REFUSES TO NAME A NEW PRIME MINISTER UNDER PRESENT CIRCUMSTANCES IS A REBUFF TO THE "NATIONALIST FRONT," WHICH HAS RECENTLY BEEN CLAIMING THAT IT COULD GET A VOTE OF CONFIDENCE IN PARLIAMENT. BY HIS DELIBERATE INACTION, THE PRESIDENT IS ALSO IN EFFECT FURTHERING THE REPUBLICAN PEOPLES' PARTY (RPP) CONTENTION THAT THE POLITICAL IMPASSE CAN BE SOLVED ONLY BY EARLY ELECTIONS. FOR THE MOMENT, THE PARTIES ARE WAITING TO SEE WHETHER EX-PRESIDENT BAYAR AND HIS FOLLOWERS WILL JOIN THE DEMOCRATIC PARTY (DP) AND TAKE THAT PARTY INTO AN ELECTION COALITION WITH THE RPP. IN ANY EVENT, WE BELIEVE THAT THE POLITICAL SITUATION WILL ENTER A NEW, BUT NOT NECESSARILY CLEARER STAGE AFTER THE DP CONVENTION. END SUMMARY.

1. AFTER THE FAILURE OF SEVERAL RECENT EFFORTS, PRESIDENT KORUTURK IS UNWILLING TO NAME A NEW PRIME MINISTER. A STATEMENT ISSUED
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BY HIS SECRETARY GENERAL ON JANUARY 13 REITERATED THE SUBSTANCE

OF HIS NEW YEARS MESSAGE, AFFIRMING THAT HE WOULD DESIGNATE A NEW PRIME MINISTER ONLY "WHEN CONDITIONS ARE SUITABLE" AND RENEWING HIS CALL FOR INTERPARTY COOPERATION. THIS CLARIFICATION CAME ON THE HEELS OF TWO WEEKS OF SPECULATION IN THE PRESS AND STATEMENTS BY POLITICAL LEADERS PARTICIPATING IN THE "NATIONALIST FRONT" WHO OBLIQUELY CRITICIZED THE PRESIDENT FOR PROLONGING THE GOVERNMENT CRISIS. THE PRESIDENT IS NOW SQUARELY ON THE RECORD AS REFUSING TO SANCTION A GOVERNMENT BASED ON A BARE PARLIAMENTARY MAJORITY OF UNCERTAIN DURATION.

2. THIS STATEMENT IS A REBUFF TO THE "NATIONALIST FRONT" WHICH HAS RECENTLY BEEN CLAIMING SUFFICIENT SUPPORT TO RECEIVE A VOTE OF CONFIDENCE IN PARLIAMENT BASED ON PROJECTED DEFECTIONS FROM THE DP. MEMBERS OF THE "NATIONALIST FRONT" HAD DEMANDED A MANDATE FOR DEMIREL IF THE RPP WERE UNABLE SPEEDILY TO FORM A CABINET. AND JUSTICE PARTY LEADER DEMIREL HAD ON JANUARY 12 SHARPLY CRITICIZED THE NOTION ATTRIBUTED TO KORUTURK BY THE PRO-RPP PRESS THAT RETURNING TO DEMIREL WOULD ONLY MEAN A LOSS OF TIME.

3. THE PRESIDENT IS ALSO IN EFFECT FURTHERING THE RPP'S CONTENTION THAT THE POLITICAL IMPASSE CAN BE SOLVED ONLY BY EARLY ELECTIONS. BY REFUSING TO DESIGNATE A PARTY LEADER TO REPLACE PRESENT PRIMIRMAK AND BY NOT EVEN SUMMONING THE PARTY CHIEFS FOR CONSULTATIONS, HE IS ALLOWING THE POLITICAL CRISIS TO INTENSIFY. THE PARTIES ARE PUT ON NOTICE THAT THEY MUST NOT EXPECT THE PRESIDENT NOW TO INTERVENE TO SAVE THEM FROM THEMSELVES.

4. FOR THE MOMENT, THE PARTIES ARE AWAITING THE RESULTS OF THE DP'S APPROACH TO EX-PRESIDENT BAYAR AND HIS FOLLOWERS TO JOIN THE PARTY NOW THAT THESE FORMER LEADERS HAVE REACQUIRED THEIR POLITICAL RIGHTS. SOME POLITICAL OBSERVERS EXPECT THAT BAYAR WILL OPT TO TAKE THE LEADERSHIP OF THE DP AND BRING THIS PARTY IN COALITION WITH THE RPP TO HOLD EARLY ELECTIONS SO THAT HIS AGING COLLEAGUES COULD RETURN TO POLITICS WITHOUT DELAY. SUCH A DECISION, HOWEVER, WOULD HAVE TO BE RATIFIED AT THE DP CONGRESS NOW SET TO START FEBRUARY 1. EVEN THEN, A PARLIAMENTARY VOTE FOR ELECTIONS WOULD PROBABLY BE DELAYED SOMEWHAT SINCE THERE WOULD BE NEED FOR DELICATE INTERPARTY NEGOTIATIONS. ALSO THE LAW REQUIRES GOING TO THE POLLS 60 DAYS AFTER THIS DECISION

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WERE PASSED, AND THE PARTIES WOULD PROBABLY PREFER TO HAVE UNTIL MAY OR JUNE TO GET READY. IT WOULD NO DOUBT TAKE ALL OF BAYAR'S PRESTIGE TO PREVENT DEFECTIONS FROM THE DP, A SMALL BUT DETERMINED GROUP OF WHICH (PERHAPS AS MANY AS 8-12) HAS INDICATED OPPOSITION TO COOPERATING WITH THE RPP. IN ANY EVENT, WE BELIEVE THAT THE POLITICAL SITUATION WILL ENTER A NEW, BUT NOT NECESSARILY CLEARER STAGE AFTER THE DP CONVENTION.

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: PRIME MINISTER, POLITICAL PARTIES, PARTY COALITION, POLITICAL SITUATION, ELECTIONS, CENTRAL LEGISLATURE, SPEECHES
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 16 JAN 1975
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: GolinoFR
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1975ANKARA00409
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D750016-1108
From: ANKARA
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1975/newtext/t19750148/aaaabpuh.tel
Line Count: 115
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION EUR
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: GolinoFR
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 07 MAY 2003
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <07 MAY 2003 by Izenbel0>; APPROVED <08 MAY 2003 by GolinoFR>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
05 JUL 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: THE PRESIDENT AND THE POLITICAL CRISIS SUMMARY: A STATEMENT BY THE SECRETARY GENERAL OF THE PRESIDENT
TAGS: PINT, TU, REPUBLICAN PEOPLES PARTY, DEMOCRATIC PARTY, (KORUTURK, FAHRI)
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 05 JUL 2006